



Christian Courier

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MCC celebrates 75 years of compassion around the world

Alan Doerksen

WINNIPEG, Man. — The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has come a long way during its 75-year history. Since its beginnings in 1920 as a joint Mennonite effort to help fellow Mennonites in war-torn Russia, MCC has developed into a worldwide organization with an annual income of \$65 million.

This year, MCC will celebrate its 75th anniversary through a series of events such as a conference entitled "The Religious Relief and Development Agency: Directions for the Future," to be held in early June at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ont. The conference will be especially for staff and board members of religious relief agencies. Later, on September 24, Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches across Canada will celebrate "MCC Sunday."

"You could title our 75th anniversary 'From Russia to Rwanda,'" says Marvin Frey, executive director of MCC's Canadian office in Winnipeg.



Throughout the 1920s, MCC assisted trainloads of Mennonites, like the Shellenberg family, to leave war-torn Russia and emigrate to Canada.

"It's both a tragic story of human suffering and a story of how Canadians have responded to the needs of people around the world through MCC."

The motto of MCC is "Ser-

vice in the Name of Christ," and it takes its motivation from Matt. 25:35-36 which calls Christians to help those who are hungry, sick, in prison or strangers.

MCC held its first official meeting on Sept. 27, 1920, after Mennonite church leaders from across North America met to discuss how they could respond to the hunger needs of Men-

nonites and others in the then Soviet Union. Various groups of Mennonites decided to work together by forming one central committee — MCC. Working through MCC, Mennonites were able to feed 75,000 people, saving many from starvation.

One person whose life was saved by MCC is Jacob Dick of Vineland, Ont. "Because of the starvation, MCC established kitchens in every Mennonite village, as well as in the nearby German and Ukrainian settlements," he recalls. "Here, meals were served to undernourished children and weak elderly people who were close to starvation. For several years, most of us had not tasted such rich food as we received from North America.... It is certain that many of us would never have survived the famine years if it had not been for the work of MCC."

Besides its food aid, MCC later sent 50 tractors and plows to farmers in Russia, and also helped many refugees come to Canada.

During the Second World War, MCC started a program for See MCC page 2...

Major social changes hidden in Ottawa's budget religious leaders told

Robert VanderVennen
TORONTO, Ont.

Canada's most needy will bear some of the greatest burdens of the new federal budget, says Marvyn Novick, professor of social work at Ryerson University.

Hidden in the budget are major social changes unreported by the media, he says, calling the budget a "desecration of Canada's poor."

Novick recently spoke at a budget briefing sponsored by the Inter-faith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church in Toronto. He con-



Marvyn Novick

siders the budget a profound challenge to Canada's religious leaders, for whom concern for the poor is a fundamental

religious belief.

The social changes Novick foresees are embedded in federal bill C-76, now undergoing hearings before the Finance Committee. They are a primary issue in Ontario's election, scheduled for June 8.

Before the budget was brought forward there was a deliberate framing of the public mood, says Novick. We were told by the government that the Canadian people are mostly concerned about the deficit, overspending and high taxation. But the public mood as determined by surveys was in fact more ambiguous, he claims.

In fact, Canadians are concerned about government wastefulness and intrusion into their lives. The government's concerns are really those of the elite, not of the general public, charges Novick.

The public worries very See GOVERNMENT p. 2...

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News

MCC starts disaster relief service, foodgrains bank

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conscientious objectors called the Civilian Public Service in the U.S. and the Alternative Service Program in Canada. Through this latter program, Canadian Mennonites worked in forestry, agriculture, building roads and other projects, says John Longhurst of MCC Canada Communications. The Alternative Service Program lasted from 1941 to 1945.

A few years later, in 1950, a Sunday School class in Hesston, Kansas, decided to help out local flood victims. This led to the formation of the Mennonite Disaster Service — a relief agency that has helped people recover and rebuild in the wake of such natural disasters as hurricanes Hugo and Andrew and recent floods in the American Midwest.

"By design, it's a North American response," says Longhurst, describing MDS. But MDS has also helped out hurricane victims in the Caribbean region.

MDS works closely with other relief organizations such as the Red Cross, says Longhurst. It focuses on the hardest-hit victims. Some MDS volunteers work for a week or

two, but MDS also does longer-term relief work. For instance, MDS volunteers are still at work helping people in the Midwest rebuild from floods that happened more than a year ago.

Crafts and orphans

In the late 1940s, MCC started SELFHELP Crafts of the World, a marketing program that buys handicrafts from artisans in the developing world and sells them in North America. MCC estimates that 12,000 people in 35 countries have received jobs through the sales of SELFHELP Crafts.

In 1954, MCC started the Orphan Support Program, to provide care for Korean children. This later became known as the Child Sponsorship Program, and soon grew to include support for families and boarding students in countries such as Vietnam, Bangladesh, India and Haiti.

Although child sponsorship appeals to many people, MCC later decided to change its focus from individual children to institutions such as orphanages. One problem with child sponsorship is that "it can produce tensions within a neighborhood or a family," says Longhurst.

The program is now called the Global Family Program.

Food coalition

One MCC project which has grown considerably over the years is the Food Bank, which was started in 1976. Now it is known as the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and is run by a coalition of 11 Christian organizations, including MCC and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.

According to Longhurst, the Foodgrains Bank is an example of how MCC deals with many projects: "You birth them, you nurture them and hopefully you give them away." Besides recruiting volunteers for its own projects, MCC also sends many to work with other relief projects around the world.

In 1979, MCC Canada was the first private agency to sign an agreement with the Canadian government to bring southeast Asian refugees to Canada. Half of Canada's 600 Mennonite and

Brethren in Christ churches sponsored about 4,000 refugees through MCC Canada's Refugee Assistance Program.

Longhurst gives one reason for the strong Mennonite support for the Asian refugees: "There have been many tens of thousands of Mennonites who've actually experienced those things. They too have had to leave everything behind."

Future challenges

But as the generation that remembers starvation in Russia passes away, MCC faces a new challenge. "How can we motivate younger generations, who have never known hunger, to be as committed to helping others as their parents?" asked Frey.

Another challenge facing MCC is declining government support. In the federal government's latest budget, it cut its annual grant to MCC by 17 per cent. "Donor fatigue" also affects relief organizations

like MCC.

"For a long time, we in the West believed that if only we injected enough money or people into the developing world, we could solve all their problems," comments Frey. "But as Ethiopia gives way to Somalia and leads to Rwanda, people realize that the problems aren't ending. Sometimes they lose hope. We have to remind Canadians that it isn't up to us to solve all the world's problems. All we may be able to do is to offer hope in a broken world."

One of MCC's newest programs is a bomb-removal project in Laos. "It's our largest non-food project ever," says Longhurst.

During the Vietnam war, cluster bombs or "bombies" the size of baseballs were dropped over Laos. These bombs still kill and maim people, so MCC is working to remove them and is looking for help from the U.S. government for this project.

Government cutbacks affect the most vulnerable

...continued from page 1

much about unemployment and child poverty. It wants redistribution of wealth to meet the needs of the poor and vulnerable, which the elite does not want, says Novick.

Canada Assistance Plan repealed

Canada's social programs like health care and the Canada Pension Program were started in 1966, when the Canada Assistance Plan became federal law. This provided for payment of these programs equally by the federal government and by the provinces. But Bill C-76 says, "The Canada Assistance Plan is repealed on March 31, 2000."

A problem today, says Novick, is that Canada set up a social welfare program like those of European nations but kept taxation at the level of the United States.

He documented from the Canadian Tax Foundation that Canada's tax income actually

dropped as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product from the mid-70s to the mid-80s. During that period spending increased, but income did not keep pace, so that under-taxing has produced a debt whose interest is a burden today.

Novick cites data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that Canada's total tax revenue as a percentage of GDP is less than the average of the other OECD member countries.

Total spending in the new budget is down 9.6 per cent, says Novick, but spending for vulnerable people is down 22.7 per cent, a fact that the media have not reported. Prime Minister Chrétien is winsomely engaging about these cuts, says Novick, unlike his predecessor, saying that he regrets doing this. But he is doing it anyway. Canada is the only nation in the western world to make this kind of move, Novick says.

Foodgrains Bank leader dies

WINNIPEG, Man. (CFB) — When Harry Neufeld died late last month, 16 million people around the world lost a friend.

Neufeld, 67, died March 31 shortly after retiring from his position as grain drive co-ordinator for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFB), a Winnipeg-based interchurch agency which collects and ships donated grain to people overseas.

During his time with the Foodgrains Bank, Neufeld was instrumental in getting Canadian farmers to donate nearly three million bushels of grain for hungry people in the developing world; enough grain, when matched by Canadian government funds, to feed 16 million people for one month. As grain drive co-ordinator, Neufeld criss-crossed the prairies to encourage farmers to share with the world's hungry. Altogether, the grain Neufeld helped to collect would fill 902 train cars — a train over 10 miles (16 kilometres) long.

"Harry believed that every person can make a difference," says Foodgrains Bank executive director Al Doerksen. "He loved to inspire farmers to share their grain, no matter how small they felt the amount was." Doerksen



Harry Neufeld (at head of table), grain drive co-ordinator, tells local farmers how the Foodgrains Bank helps "pass the food around the table."

recalls that Neufeld loved to tell stories; one of his favorites was the Bible story of how Jesus fed 5,000 people with only a few loaves and fishes. "Harry was a salesman, always wanting to top the latest record — by the time he'd finished with the story, he was challenging farmers to feed 50,000," Doerksen says. "He always wanted to inspire people to reach for higher goals."

When Foodgrains Bank staff recall Neufeld, they remember the story he told about his family's Thanksgiving table. Around the table were Harry, his wife, Tina, and their five

children and nine grandchildren. On the table would be the steaming mashed potatoes, the gravy, the turkey, the cranberries and so on. He would describe the scene in terms of passing the food across the table. Someone calling for the carrots. Someone else noticing a neighbor's plate needed more turkey. People of different tastes and different ages, all responsive to each other's wants and needs. This picture — a world in which families get along, in which people enjoy each other's presence, in which all have enough to eat — was Harry's vision for the world.

A three-in-one miracle



MCC health educator Margaret De Jong with Madam Apolon and triplets Eksen, Wilmer and Wilson at 2 1/2 months. The family lives in a thatched-roof, mud-floor house about a 10-minutes' walk outside of Bwadlorens, in remote northeast Haiti. The Apolons, subsistence farmers, also have a daughter, nine-year-old Adlin, who is the only one who can distinguish one baby from another. The couple lost two other children in early childhood. De Jong is from Fredericton, New Brunswick, where she is a member of Skyline Acres United Baptist Church.

Margaret De Jong

BWADLORENS, Haiti — "It's a miracle of God," agreed all the passengers in the Land-Rover as I drove them home to Bwadlorens, a town here in rural northeast Haiti.

I agreed with them, though I saw the miracle from a different perspective. The passengers were rejoicing because they had no hospital bill. I was rejoicing because despite my inexperience in midwifery, I had just helped in an unusual but successful delivery.

Shortly after sunset, we — myself, Madam Apolon and five of her family members and friends — had left Bwadlorens. Because I have access to a vehicle, they had asked me to take Madam Apolon to the hospital; she had been in labor for almost 24 hours and the midwife did not foresee birth any time soon.

Feeling every bump

The trip to Hospital Byen-fezans, 40 km away over rough dirt roads, usually takes about two hours. Now I had to drive slower because of Madam

Apolon's sensitivity to each and every bump. She also frequently asked that we stop, so she could rearrange herself in the vehicle

or relieve herself at the roadside. After two hours, we were only half way to the hospital.

A half hour later, Madam

Apolon asked me to stop again. We waited while she went through several contractions. Just as she was about to get back into the Land-Rover, she felt another contraction coming.

She squatted down, as Haitian women in labor typically do. This time a tiny head began to appear. I grabbed some gloves from the vehicle's first-aid kit and made it to her just in time to catch a baby boy.

As we waited for Madam Apolon to deliver the placenta, we were surprised to see another head emerge. And after Baby No. 2, were we ever surprised to see a foot appear!

A rude awakening

Despite the breech position, Baby No. 3 was soon delivered. We initially thought he was dead; he did not cry or move. But then he made a slight arm movement, and we all became excited. Madam Apolon's friends encouraged the baby to cry by blowing on him and banging a pot by his head. While another person held him head down, I tapped on the baby's chest to loosen secretions in his lungs.

Several times it appeared he was no longer breathing so I blew short puffs of air into his nose and mouth. Finally after 20 to 30 minutes, the baby let out some stronger cries.

We didn't have anything to cut the umbilical cords with. Two people hopped into the Land-Rover with me and we drove to the closest town, fortunately only five minutes away. I knocked on several doors, waking inhabitants and explaining our situation. At the third house we found a razor blade.

We returned to where Madam Apolon, her three newborns and the others were sitting at the roadside. With some string we had in the truck, I tied and cut the cords.

Then we headed home. The family had been mentally preparing for a Cesarean section, so a roadside birth had saved them high medical costs. And, although I'm a nurse, this was the first time I had helped with a delivery — and not a typical one at that! — and all three babies were alive.

Indeed, the event was a miracle of God.

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Editorial

Our lawyer takes our case to heaven

When we celebrate Ascension Day on May 25, we can focus on the triumphal entry of Jesus into heaven and try to understand what that means for the church. The word "defence counsel" comes to mind.

For us to go to heaven will be the same as for O.J. Simpson to go to trial. Simpson has hired himself a bevy of top-notch lawyers. It remains to be seen whether they will get him off the hook. But when we appear before God, we had better have a top-notch lawyer, too, because our dirty finger and blood prints are all over the creation. A couple of DNA angels could easily pin us down as culprits.

That's where Jesus comes in. He traveled to heaven to claim our innocence. Imputed innocence, that is. We didn't come by it honestly, as they say, by way of our genes or personal character. Nor did we come by it

dishonestly. My T-shirts take on imputed whiteness after they have been through a few cycles in the washing machine. We may take on imputed righteousness after we have been washed in the Golgotha blood of Jesus.

Innocent blood sample

To continue the DNA analogy: Perhaps it would be appropriate to say that instead of being washed in the blood of Jesus, an image that gives many of us the metaphorical heebie jeebies, we are given a blood transfusion with Jesus as donor. His DNA is not to be found on any crime spot on this globe. His innocent blood running through our veins should be enough to persuade the heavenly judge that we are not guilty.

But someone must still argue our case in

front of the Judge because the prosecution, in the form of Satan, will be well prepared to bring charges against us. Satan has quite a dossier on us. All those things that were done in the dark are known to him. He has night vision. He is the Prince of Darkness, for Pete's sake. So who better to defend us than the one to whom has been given all power and authority in heaven and on earth?

All Jesus has to do is to tell the judge that Satan is accusing a person who no longer exists. And the judge may ask for *habeas corpus*. I wonder what Latin term the legal profession has for what follows after that! *Persona non vivata*?

And all that because Jesus ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, from where he shall come to judge the quick and the ones who have stopped moving. **BW**

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Don't let the bureaucratic sun get in your eyes

Dr. George VanderVelde has done the Christian Reformed churches in Canada a favor by sounding the alarm bell in his article on pages 10 and 11 of this issue. Not much discussion has taken place in the Reformed press of an important restructuring proposal that seeks to replace the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada with a board of trustees. That's unfortunate. Even VanderVelde's article comes at the 11th hour. But better now than after synod.

What is at stake, according to VanderVelde, is the mission and ministry of the Christian Reformed churches in Canada. How can churches take ownership of a ministry that is governed by a board not accountable to an assembly? he wonders. And we should wonder along with him. Are these ministries in danger of becoming more of a bureaucratic function than a vital outreach?

VanderVelde is responding to a report which appears in the Agenda of Synod 1995 and which carries several motions that will be decided on in June. The report is the work of the Committee to Study Structure for Ministry in Canada. The report of this committee follows Synod 1993's declaration that "the introduction of regional synods is not advisable at the present time." Instead, Synod 1993 approved a change in Church Order Article 44-b to strengthen the present ministry in Canada by giving the CCRCC meetings the status of a classis.

The new proposal takes an entirely different direction, however. It wants to do away with the CCRCC, because, it says, "the CCRCC does

not and cannot fit the primary governance structure of the CRC." And so it proposes a new structure that in essence fits the governance structure of the CRC even less. Should not all work done by our churches be under the authority of an assembly?

Rather than making proposals that would strengthen the work of the CCRCC, the committee that is making its proposals to synod in June has decided to highlight the weaknesses of this body and opt for a structure that may shine in efficiency and pale in grassroots identity and ministry effectiveness.

Our voice in Canada

Without becoming nationalistic, which fellow believers would soon lampoon as idolatry, and rightly so, we should as Canadian churches be concerned about our voice and work within Canadian society. Is our mission in Canada going to be strengthened by this new proposal or weakened?

We think it will be weakened. And Classis Eastern Canada seems to think so, too. It has overruled synod to reject the recommendations that want to do away with the CCRCC and replace it with a board of trustees.

The only effective way in which the Christian Reformed churches in Canada can together be a salting salt in our social, economic and political environment is for them to form into a regional synod, as Classis Eastern Canada has recommended in a separate overture.

We hope the delegates to synod will unanimously reject the restructuring proposal for ministry in Canada. **BW**

Letters

To drop Article 71 would be suicidal for the church

I appreciated your editorial on the narrow and broad view of the covenant and coercion with regard to Christian school support. You rightly conclude that it is "entirely appropriate if all Christian

Reformed churches expect of all its (sic) leaders support for the intent of the church to encourage (not force) the establishment and maintenance of Christian schools. The issue you addressed is

whether Article 71 of the Church Order of the CRC is, either by intent or in its application, illegitimately coercive. Should support for Christian education affect one's eligibility for leadership in the church?

Around the periphery of this issue some things need to be said to avoid misunderstandings:

1. Humility befits supporters of Christian education.

2. Christian schools and those involved in them sometimes violate their biblical confession and behave in ways inconsistent with their principles. That's sad.

3. Public schools and those involved in them also violate *their* (secular) confession. In fact, the presence of Christians may be one reason why the secular confession is not as consistently implemented as it could be.

4. All of this does not change two basic things:

a. The confession of the public school system as we know it is starkly opposed to biblical Christianity.

b. During at least the past 25 years, the public school has implemented its secular confession more consistently, and Christian schools have made a lot of progress in implementing their biblical confession. So the clear differences at the confessional level are becoming more obvious also in educational practice and effects.

Not coercive

We should be clear, then, about what Article 71 does and does not say. It talks about encouraging and urging support. It does not say that a person who understands the meaning of the Lordship of Christ and the threat of competing ideologies, but for some regrettable reason cannot send his child to a school which supports him in that, is automatically ineligible for office. It basically says that the church should support Christian education which "...has its foundation in the Creator-creature relationship taught in Scripture" (Synod 1955). Simply stated, the church wants its young members nurtured in a Christian way rather than having them in-

doctrinated to the contrary. But some say it is coercive.

Let's state that argument against Article 71 clearly: the church is accused of being coercive because it resists having its offices held by people who:

1. do not promote education which confesses the Lordship of Christ, and, by implication,

2. do promote an educational system which explicitly and by force of law denies that confession any standing.

It's like accusing the conservative party of being coercive because it does not encourage Marxists into its leadership or calling the Roman Catholic church coercive because it does not consider Henry Morgenthau eligible to be a bishop, or insisting that strict Baptists ought to allow smoking bartenders as pastors. It asks that the church accept leaders who do not support crucial elements of its confession.

The biggest threat to the church in North America today is not Marxism, the New Age movement, lodges, gambling, homosexuality, or abortion, though the church would do well to question whether advocates of these should hold church offices. The big enemy is secularism, popularly defined years ago by Dr. Runer as the conviction that God doesn't matter in the things that matter. The world then gets divided into two realms: 1. An ever shrinking realm, often labelled sacred, personal, and private, in which God is still grudgingly granted some relevance, and 2. an ever expanding realm, often labelled secular, or public in which God is declared to be irrelevant. This describes the creed of public education in Canada and the U.S.

By contrast, one of the things that even outside observers see as a major strength of the CRC is the fact that it supports Christian schools which in turn strengthen the church. Those who want to drop Article 71 are asking the church to be suicidal. Support for one of its strongest allies should be optional. Support for its most subversive enemy should be allowed. Should the church be coerced into doing that?

Sylvan Gerritsma
St. Catharines, Ont.

God used 1898 statement to strengthen Christian dayschools

After reading your editorial "Do you hold a narrow or a broad view of the Covenant?" (CC, April 21), I looked forward to the promised follow up.

Thank you for printing the grounds "for asking that all ministers and elders... labor to the utmost of their power in the promotion of Christian education wherever and whenever possible."

Strong words they are and, in my opinion, as true today as in 1898. I am convinced that God used those words to

strengthen Christian day schools through the following decades. Rather than merely being an ecclesiastical statement, I consider those words a confession of the Reformed vision that all of life lies in God's domain. To believe less than that is to deny God's sovereignty in all of life.

I echo your words: "We believe that, especially in a secular society such as ours, in which church members are often sucked into secularism, fundamentalism

Continued on page 6...

50th Anniversary Rearview Mirror



The following letter exchange between two respected leaders of the past—graduate student Bernard Zylstra and C.C. editor Dick Farenhorst—took place in the March 18, 1960, issue of Calvinist Contact.

Calvinist Contact March 1960

READERS WRITE:

C. C. SQUELCHES INTEREST

Dear Sir,

The letter from the Victoria chapter of the Calvinistic Culture Association in the March 4 issue of C. C. is of greater interest, I think, than was displayed by the editorial manager. It is an excellent contribution to similar suggestions made by Dave Valstar in earlier pages of C. C. The response by D. F. suggested that he was of the opinion that the writer was somewhat disposed towards a "Dutch" look at things. This disappointed me. For if Calvinist-Contact is to be of value as Christian journalism, it should not squelch such clear-cut interest in the basic problems of every political society in the Western World (including Canada) by this type of response. There is no reference in the letter at all that the writer overlooked certain historical differences between Europe and Canada. At least, it seems to me that there is nothing particularly "Dutch" in his list of problems worth discussing in the pages of C.C.: He mentions such matters as the relation between authority and freedom; the supremacy of the people; the rule of the majority; relation of Church and state; Christian education; labour and management. Every responsible Canadian citizen will direct his attention to these problems. And since they concern the fundamentals of politics, it is the duty of the Christian citizenry that it solves these problems in a Christian way.

Christian journalism aims at assisting the Christian — better every — citizen in finding solutions. Thus C.C. will greatly benefit its readers if these and similar topics were treated from time to time in its pages: from a Christian perspective (Valstar has laid the foundation!) and with direct relevance to the Canadian Political scene.

Sincerely,
Bernard Zylstra,
Ann Arbor, Mich.

We want to make a few remarks now already, since Mr. Zylstra did not grasp the thought in our comment apparently. Nowhere we have said that the Victoria Branch of the Christian Culture Association was disposed to a Dutch look at things. To the contrary. Twice we stated that our friends in Victoria had not overlooked the danger. But the idea of a political party received a much wider attention through the publication of this initiative. Mr. Valstar has suggested such action long before already, and it is gratifying that a group follows his lead.

Our comment on the Victoria letter was only written as a well meant advice that right from the start we should try to get the idea of Christian politics across to Canadians. We have not been too successful on this score in the past. To take one example: There is no valid reason why Canadians could not join our churches of reformed confession. Nevertheless, our churches are known as the "Dutch" churches. The same stands for our schools: they are labelled "Dutch" schools.

We do not want to see the same thing happen if we would come to political action. For this reason we would urge everyone who will take an active part, to make sure that our ideas and terminology are to be understood by Canadians as well. Who said that the list of problems is peculiarly Dutch? We didn't. We have only suggested that we should study these problems with the Canadian scene in mind.

At the end of their letter, our friends in Victoria encourage us "to write about it in our local papers etc." We would like to underscore this, so that right from the beginning our entire action would not make a foreign impression.

Ed. C.C.

Education/Letters

When teaching becomes a job

Once again the Alberta trees are sprouting new leaves; the flowering bushes are giving hints of color: a new class of King's graduates prepares for further education or the work force. Mid-May is always a wonderful time to reflect on what has been; to prepare for what will come. When this time of reprieve is accompanied by the warmth from a bright sun, I welcome the distinctiveness of seasonal change in Canada.

Mid-May is also the time of year when most schools (especially the Christian schools) have completed their teacher assignments and hiring for the new school year. For those who will be beginning a new teaching assignment, the coming summer months enable them to adjust to a different identity. For those who find themselves without teaching

contracts, the next months allow them time to ponder: "What's next?"

Because of the school calendar, teachers are probably the only professionals with at least two months' annual time to prepare for change. Because teachers identify themselves very much with their profession as a life of skilful service to others, two months may be insufficient in forging a new identity. Just ask those professionals who have retired, how long it took them to adjust to new school beginnings they were not involved in.

Issues of teacher vacations, time spent on the job, parity between subject-level and grade-level teachers, have been raised repeatedly in the past months in our educational community. The Alberta curriculum guides stipulate the minimum minutes to be taught for each course and

the minimum/maximum ranges of hours students may spend in school. Teachers who previously taught and prepared as was needed are now calculating the hours spent off and on task and comparing their numbers with other grade and subject colleagues.

Principals, in defense of their teachers and justice, have dug in their heels in demanding or resisting change. In the end, everyone will lose, because the teacher as a professional with "a sense of calling" and "self-regulation" and "colleague control" will have been undermined in a decision imposed by a committee and board.

Maybe I am the only one who needs the next few months to sort out the differences between teachers and professionals and to accept the fact that the world has changed to demand accountability of teachers as

employees. It may be that employees' identities are not as job-linked as I tend to think. Maybe it is more important for teachers to see themselves as parents or spouses or successful artisans.

Unfortunately, when teaching becomes a job, then, especially in private Christian schools, the nature of the educational community also changes. The parents become the employers who may well desire to dictate the terms of employment to their employees. And since many parents do not experience or appreciate the need for a two month reprieve to prepare for change and renewal, I dread to think of what this could mean for our annual refuelling.

The American elm in front of my study window is a little greener and fuller than it was a few hours ago. The prospect of

EDUCATION

Alyce Oosterhuis



shade brings hope. And hope can revive visions, commitments, a rededication of lives in service to others.

Alyce Horzeberg Oosterhuis has just completed months of 60-hour weeks teaching at The King's University College in Edmonton.

Parents campaign for educational choice

ANCASTER, Ont. (OACS) — Parents across Ontario are mobilizing to confront candidates for the provincial legislature with a message of support for independent Christian schools. Regional meetings have been held in Brockville, Cobourg, Newmarket, Dundas and London.

The political action campaign, with its slogan, "Our

Children... Our Choice!" has been gaining momentum since early February. Successful activities include letter writing campaigns, candidates' report cards, meetings with candidates, presentations to political parties and participations on radio and TV shows. The aim of the campaign is to heighten public and political awareness of the discrimination evident in

the government policy of non-funding of independent schools, of the valuable contributions made by independent schools and of the limits on educational opportunities for children.

OACS has a case to be heard by the Supreme Court of Canada this year dealing with equity in education as a parental right guaranteed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

God used 1898 statement

...continued from page 5

or both, Reformed Christian day school education is an essential countervailing force. In our present climate, developing a Christian mind will not happen without Christian education at all levels.

If leaders in the CRC do not strongly support that vision of Christian education, I fear that a "Reformed Christian mind"

will be lost.

I realize that Paul had little to say about specifically today's society, but I believe that he would weigh rather heavily the vision that God be acknowledged in all of life, including the daily education of our children.

Marc Stroobosch
Principal of SDCH
Smithville, Ont.

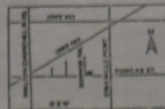
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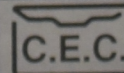
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Media/Arts

Mainline publishers find a sizeable niche

Jane Ouwehand

WINFIELD, B.C. — What started with two friends getting together to publish manuscripts rejected by G.R. Welsh has now become the fourth largest publishing house in British Columbia.

As editor of the *United Church Observer* Jim Taylor had come to know Ralph Milton who did freelance writing and TV work. At a conference they

devotions, sold 14,000 copies in the first year. Wood Lake's next book, Milton's *This United Church of Ours* sold 20,000 in its first year.

Filling the vacuum

Taylor says there had been a vacuum in publishing ever since Ryerson Press had folded 12 years earlier. Taylor and Milton were publishing religious books in the mainstream of the Chris-

The "red book," as it came to be called, had been published when people's perceptions were changing. None of the songs had gender-inclusive language. Many of the songs had "thees" and "thous."

Songs for a Gospel People (the green book) was more up to date. Taylor describes it as "connected to the kind of theology people believed." To date they have sold over 451,000 copies to all kinds of churches in Canada and the U.S.

Another big success has been a Sunday School curriculum called *The Whole People of God*. According to Taylor, there had been a widespread dissatisfaction with available Sunday School. Many churches had been trying out a different Sunday School curriculum each year.

A group of churches in Regina had written their own curriculum which they knew was working, but they needed a publisher. "It was with terror that we tried it," says Taylor. Wood Lake Books had estimated that it could sell the curriculum to 250 congregations the first year. In fact, 600 were sold. Now over 4,000 congregations use the curriculum.

Counteracting decline

Co-publisher Dave Cleary describes the ministry aspect of their work as he notes that there is a decline in mainline churches now. One way they address this is to continue to provide

resources for the pastor:

magazines, Sunday School curricula and training, song books, and soon a licensing program for reproducing music on overheads and in bulletins.

Another way in which Wood Lake addresses the decline in churches is to take the "wealth of wisdom and experience available in the Christian church" and work to provide it

believe; they are looking for something more. They would be uncomfortable if somebody asked them if they had a conversion experience, but they are trying to live their faith. They tend to do it in a kind of quiet way. They are not very vocal."

Statistics show that this is quite a big niche, about 2.7 million Canadians.

Wood Lake's staff members belong to mainline denominations. "We speak all kinds of languages but we're not good at speaking evangelical," says Taylor. The exception would be Lloyd Mackey's book, *These Evangelical Churches of Ours* published this January.

Perhaps their work can be typified by their approach to Lois Wilson's trip around the world. (Wilson is the former moderator of the United Church of Canada.) The United Church magazine *Mandate* covered various issues which came up in the course of her travels.

But Wood Lake Books published stories about "Lois rediscovering her theology" as she met poor and disadvantaged people around the world.

Taylor notes that what *Mandate* published lasted about a year, but what Wood Lake Books published is still selling. "If it deals genuinely with a person's faith it lasts a long time," he says. "Otherwise it gets outdated quickly."



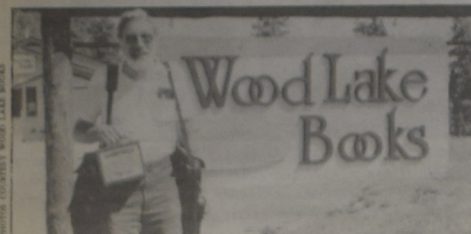
Jim Taylor

through W.H. Smith and Coles Book stores in a way that is "not stigmatized as churchy."

Some examples are Don Posterski's books *Where's a Good Church?* and *True to You*, and Reginald Bibby's *There's Got to Be More*. Clearly mentions internet, CD rom, Vision TV and computer disks as new ways to reach an audience.

Not good at 'evangelical'

Taylor describes some of the people who buy their material as "mainline seekers." He explains: "They are not self-satisfied about what they know or



Ralph Milton, founder of Wood Lake Books

attended they discovered that they both had submitted a book manuscript to Welsh, but Welsh would not publish either manuscript unless they could be guaranteed \$4,000 in sales for each in the first year.

Milton decided to publish his book himself. In 1980 he published *Gift of Story* and in 1981 he published Taylor's *An Everyday God*.

That's how Wood Lake Books was born. Last year the company made almost \$3 million and employed 25 people.

An *Everyday God*, a book of

tian tradition: books which didn't say, "Park your brains on the shelf," asserts Taylor.

After their first few books, Wood Lake had "dispelled the vacuum." But the publisher went through a few years when it was questionable whether it would survive, says Taylor.

Their big breakthrough came with *Songs for a Gospel People*. It was not big, only 134 songs. Originally it was intended as a supplement for the *Hymnbook*, the hymnal published jointly by the United and Anglican churches.

Poetry book captures scenes and images from Dutch life

So Much Sky

by Jan Willem Schulte Nordholt, translated by Henrietta Ten Harnsel. *Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1994. 62 pp., softcover, \$9.95 U.S.*

Hugh Cook

Readers in North America may know Jan Willem Schulte Nordholt, professor emeritus at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands, primarily as a renowned scholar and author of books on American history. Less known is the fact that Schulte Nordholt is also author of a substantial body of poetry published last year in collected form.

Readers in the Dutch Reformed community in North

America may also know Henrietta Ten Harnsel, professor emerita at Calvin College and translator of Dutch poetry as diverse as that of 17th century metaphysical poet Jacobus Revius and of 20th century poet of children's verse, Annie Schmidt. For this work Ten Harnsel has received the prestigious Martinus Nijhoff Award for translation.

Splendid partnership

It seems natural, then, for Schulte Nordholt and Ten Harnsel to put their gifts together. *So Much Sky* is the splendid result.

The book contains 47 poems and 14 beautiful black-and-white photographs by the author. They capture scenes and

images we associate with Dutch life: an early morning sun pouring light on a river; the reflection of a city hall shimmering in the water of a canal; a Dutch city across an expanse of river, in the foreground 11 geese swimming in a straight line.

But the poems present also the peculiar and quirky: a man named Blumhardt who, in preparation for Christ's return, kept a coach and horses ready his whole life long so that, when the times should be fulfilled, "he would climb into his seat — tall hat and Sunday best — sitting up straight, he would go trotting forth to meet his Lord"; or the poet's neighbor in the apartment below who plays the organ each night, always at the same time and always the

same song, "Abide With Me."

The poems explore the subjects of death, art, the Dutch landscape, the Lord's Supper, and the believer's relationship with God. The poet struggles with doubt, not as Thomas did, who says in one poem, "He is so holy, he does not exist if I can't really touch him with this hand" — no, for the poet God's existence is continuously affirmed in nature, "just as in a cold wintergrove, the black, straight trunks rise from the snow/as signs of God's great faithfulness." As the poet says in the same poem, "Everything that God began/he rounds off perfect as a poem."

On the surface, as Frederick Buechner points out in his fine foreword, these poems are

simple and straightforward, but they also suggest deeper complexities and a submerged world of shadow and mystery.

The book is unified not only by its recurring themes but also by the traditional form of the poems. A good number of the poems are variations of the sonnet form, both Petrarchan and Shakespearean, or consist of rhyming couplets or quatrains. To Ten Harnsel's credit, the poems do not read like translations but as poems in their own right, which is an accomplishment given the poems' tight forms.

Buy *So Much Sky* and enjoy the collaboration of this fine poet and gifted translator.

Church/Kingdom

The King's to offer environmental studies

EDMONTON (TKUC) — Alberta's Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development, Jack Ady, announced that The King's University College has been selected to offer a unique new undergraduate university program in environmental studies. The program at The King's was selected for funding, along with a number of other programs at Alberta post-secondary institutions, in the context of the Alberta government's "Access Fund"

competition.

The new four-year program leading to either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree combines an environmental studies major with concentrations in the humanities, social or natural sciences.

Unique features of the program are its flexibility, interdisciplinary nature and integrative approach. A four-month summer internship is included in the program which is to be offered beginning in September 1995.

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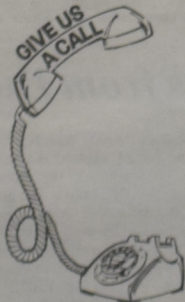
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Stan de Jong
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Dutch choir will visit Canada



The Christian Mixed Choir "Besorah" of the Netherlands, established in 1989, has made several international concert tours: Israel (1990), Hungary (1991 and 1994), and London, England (1992). These tours were held under the auspices of the "Evangelische Omroep," the Netherlands. The 1995 tour to Canada and the U.S.A. is to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Holland. (See page 18 for itinerary.)

Italy's bleeding Madonna's a mystery

CIVITAVECCHIA, Italy (EP) — A statue of the Virgin Mary has recently undergone a CAT scan and X-rays, but none of the tests have been able to explain the mysterious tears of blood flowing from the eyes of the statue in Civitavecchia.

The 17-inch tall statue of the Mother of Jesus is one of some 15 icons around the country that have reportedly shed tears of blood in recent months. While scientists are examining the statues to see if the liquid drops are fraudulent, thousands of pilgrims are flocking to see the miraculous sight.

A forensic pathologist verified that the liquid coming from the Civitavecchia statue was male blood, but an X-ray and CAT scan disclosed no

device inside the statue that could expel the blood. The blood was first spotted February 2 on the statue in Civitavecchia, and since has been seen on statues and religious plaques from Verona in the north to Palermo, Sicily, in the south. At least 30 witnesses, including a local police chief, have seen the blood coming out of the eyes of the Madonnas.

For many of Italy's faithful Roman Catholics, the tears are being interpreted as a sign that the country needs to clean up its morals. Sociologists interpret the mass obsession with the weeping statues and plaques as a reaction to a lack of spirituality in modern western society.



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Psalm 19 and a new study Bible

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Psalm 19:1, NIV).

Psalm 19 has often been cited in recent years in connection with the debates in Reformed circles about the relation of science and Scripture. For example, in the controversial 1991 Report on Creation and Science of the Christian Reformed Church, Psalm 19 is quoted in support of the doctrine of general revelation, which that Report linked closely to the phenomena investigated by science. In the ensuing debates it was sometimes denied that Psalm 19 had anything to do with general revelation at all. Such an interpretation was deemed to be foreign to sound Reformed exegesis.

It is not my intention in this column to argue that Psalm 19 can be legitimately used to

defend a doctrine of general revelation, or that this doctrine is of crucial importance for a Reformed understanding of the scientific enterprise. Although I personally subscribe in both these views, my point now is simply to stress that the connection between Psalm 19 and general revelation is commonly made in the Reformed tradition.

The New Geneva Study Bible

This point was forcefully brought home to me when I recently received a copy of the *New Geneva Study Bible*, just published by Thomas Nelson Publishers. What is characteristic about this study Bible is that its notes are all written from an explicit Reformed confessional perspective. The general editor is the well-known Reformed theologian R.C. Sproul, and the list of associated editors includes the names of such Reformed luminaries as Roger

Nicole and J.I. Packer. Many of the contributors are from such solidly Reformed institutions as Westminster Theological Seminary and Reformed Theological Seminary.

Among the features of this study Bible are five short articles on such topics as "Reformed Theology" and "Higher Criticism" at the end of the volume, and a series of 96 "Theological Notes" interspersed in the body of the biblical text. For example, next to Gen. 17:12 there is a theological note on "Infant Baptism," and next to Rom. 9:18 there is one on "Election and Reprobation."

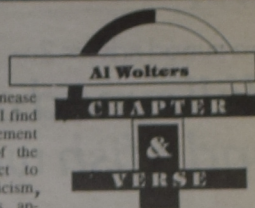
For anyone who would like to have a one-volume study Bible written from an explicit Reformed confessional position, this volume can be highly recommended.

Putting the cart before the horse

Nevertheless, I must confess

to a nagging feeling of unease about this work. Although I find myself in cordial agreement with the overall tenor of the notes, both with respect to theology and biblical criticism, I wonder whether it is appropriate in a volume devoted to the elucidation of Scripture to insist so strongly on the theological distinctiveness of a particular confessional tradition. Should our confessions and our theology not be more obviously subordinate to Scripture itself? I find especially troubling the subtitle which the editors chose for this study Bible: "Bringing the Light of the Reformation to Scripture." Isn't that putting things exactly the wrong way around?

Despite these criticisms, I was happy to see the theological note accompanying Psalm 19:1. It is entitled "General Revelation," and outlines some main features of this part of traditional Reformed doctrine.



Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. He was one of the authors of the CRC Report on Creation and Science.

Ontario Bible College celebrates 100 years of ministry

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO, Ont. — Canada's largest seminary and third-largest Bible college are celebrating their centennial this year with a series of special events.

Ontario Bible College and Ontario Theological Seminary, now based in North York, Ont.,



Dr. Milton Wan

had their beginnings in 1894, when a small group of clergy and Christian businessmen met in downtown Toronto to discuss how to train Christians effectively.

Originally known as Toronto Bible Training School, and later Toronto Bible College, OBC was located in downtown Toronto until 1976, when it relocated to its present suburban location. The new campus allowed the creation of OTS, which has quickly grown since

then to become Canada's largest seminary, with more than 560 students. OBC now has about 530 students.

OBC/OTS is transdenominational, with many of its students coming from Baptist, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Free Methodist churches, says communications staffworker Sandy Green.

Many internationals

One unique aspect of OBC/OTS is its highly multicultural nature. About 24 per cent are international students, says Green, who adds that the multicultural nature of Toronto ties in well with the college and seminary.

One key program at OTS is the Chinese Ministry Program, which was started three years ago by Dr. Milton Wan. About 50 students take part in this program, which is directed by Dr. Wan and several part-time instructors.

"I have a vision that Christians from the East and from the West will meet each other, benefit from each other, and share with each other in this seminary through the Chinese Ministry Program," Wan states.

This year, OBC/OTS have been presenting a series of special centennial events. One is a

celebration banquet held May 12, which featured composer and singer Ken Medema and a video giving a glimpse of the college's life and its vision for the future.

School promotes mission

Another special event is *Edge of Tomorrow* — a musical drama based on the life of mission pioneer Hudson Taylor. The college and seminary are co-sponsoring this program with Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the organization Hudson Taylor founded as the China Inland Mission in 1865. *Edge of Tomorrow* is presently touring across eastern Canada, from Nova Scotia to Ontario.

Overseas Missionary Fellowship has traditionally had close ties to OBC/OTS. In the late 1880s, Hudson Taylor came to Canada to meet with church leaders. "That made a direct impetus for the founding of the school," says Gerald Dykema, the mission's candidate co-ordinator. Since that time, many missionaries have come to Overseas Missionary Fellowship through OBC/OTS, says Dykema.

Reformed connection

There are also connections between OTS and the Toronto-

based Institute for Christian Studies. For the past six years or so, several Institute instructors have been teaching courses at OTS, says Institute president Harry Fernhout. Paul Marshall and Brian Walsh teach world-view courses at OTS, and Ken Badley recently taught a course in sociology of knowledge there.

This summer, OTS professor John Kessler will be teaching a

course at a joint summer program hosted by Institute for Christian Studies and the University of Toronto's Wycliffe College.

Fernhout notes similarities and differences between OTS and the Institute. "We both operate at the graduate level. Their programs are mainly theological programs. Our programs are more academic in nature."



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Feature

Pre-synod advice 2

Will synod approve a two-legged stool and a fish without a pond?

George Vandervelde

The mission and ministry of the Canadian Christian Reformed churches will undergo momentous changes if a proposal submitted to the 1995 Synod is adopted. The Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (hereafter referred to as the Council) would be disbanded. In its place would arise an expanded and more powerful Board of Trustees, complete with an Executive Director. Before considering the repercussions of these recommendations for the Canadian churches and their mission in Canada here is a quick overview of the proposal as a whole.

A three-legged stool

The Report presents its three main proposals as a three-legged stool. The first leg consists of integrating existing ministries of the Council into the denominational structures. This means, for example, the establishment of a Canadian Home Missions Committee and a Canadian Back to God Hour Committee. As a result, the Native Ministries in Canada, which are presently a distinct ministry of the Council, would be incorporated into the Canadian arm of Home Missions. Similarly, the work of the Council's Electronic Ministries Committee would become the responsibility of a Canadian Back to God Hour Committee.

The second leg involves "strengthening our denominational vision for an implementation of ministry in Canada." Strangely, little if anything can be found in this section that resembles a "vision for ministry." Rather, the report gives this leg the shape of what it calls "administrative machinery." Concretely this second leg involves setting up an enlarged Canadian Board of Trustees, as well as a full-time Canadian Executive Director of Ministries. The Board would be made up of one representative from each Canadian classis. This Board would presumably be responsible for the over-all supervision of various committees

for Canadian ministries.

The third leg is diaconal. The report recommends that deacons be represented at the meetings of classes and synods. Classes meetings would be enlarged: a deacon representative would be added to the customary pastor and elder representatives from

Canadian Council.

But it seems quite likely that the Synod will do its sawing precisely where the committee says it can't. After all, Synod 1995 will be dealing with several overtures that object precisely to this "leg" — some because it would give deacons

structure will be the proposed Board of Trustees. It is important to realize that the Christian Reformed Church established a "Board of Trustees" rather recently (1993) and this Board is a strange fish in a Reformed church pond. It has its origins in the corporate world, initially

of the "Board's" limited scope and its subordinate role as a "servant of synod." Another overture concerns more than name. It reprimands the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director of Ministries for having appointed a study committee. Such authority, the overture insists, is the sole prerogative of the churches in assembly, namely, synod.

Fish without pond

Although the current denominational Board of Trustees is a strange fish, at least it swims within assembly waters. By contrast, picture the Canadian situation as envisaged by the Report. Here this strange fish will have no pond. Yet, it is to live! The Canadian Board in its assigned region of operation is not accountable *as Board* to any assembly of the churches of that region. Within its jurisdiction the Board gives account to churches only insofar as the individual Board members report back to 12 disparate classes. The only assembly to which the Canadian Board is accountable is the Synod.

Even assuming an all-wise Board, the proposed structure creates an entirely unhealthy situation. It undermines the mission of the churches in Canada. If ministry proposals and projects are to be more than agency programs, they must be "owned" by the churches. Structural integration, no matter how efficiently run, administrative machinery, no matter how finely tuned, an Executive Director of Ministries, no matter how competent — all these do not turn programs into authentic ministry and mission of the churches. For these churches will have no communal way of coming to grips with the challenge of ministry and mission in the Canadian context in the third millennium.

If mission is to be truly the mission of the people of God, the Canadian churches must communally shape and give direction to agency ministries. The "Structure for Ministry" proposals short-circuit the development of authentic ministry and mission of the Christian Reformed churches in Canada.

(Continued on opposite page)



Executive of Council meeting in Willowdale, Ont. in 1989.

A peculiar leg

Even though the report speaks of its proposal as a three-legged stool, so that sawing any one leg brings collapse, in the case of the diaconal leg this is true only for a curious reason. The Report calls for the disbanding of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada. Organized in 1968, this is the only official assembly beyond the local church council at which deacons are officially represented. Thus, if the Committee had recommended that this Council be eliminated, without recommending that deacons be delegated to the existing major assemblies, the Report would have courted a storm of protest from Canadian deacons, not to speak of entire local church councils, classes, and the

(possibly women) a "ruling" role at classis or synod. Synod, therefore, will likely greet the Report's proposal regarding deacons either with a flat "no" or, more likely, will hand this leg to yet another study committee.

A strange fish

To return to the Report's implications for the mission of the Canadian CRCs, it must be noted, first of all, that many of the recommendations for streamlining the Canadian ministries make good sense. The most obvious example is the proposal to incorporate the Canadian Native Ministries into Canadian Home Missions. The same can be said for the proposed amalgamation of the Electronic Ministries and the Back to God Hour. But the critical issue lies at a different level. It concerns the overall mission of the Christian Reformed Churches in Canada.

This side of the border, the highest Canadian authority

finding its way into the church through the transom of legal requirements for "incorporation." To satisfy state laws, the synodical interim committee would momentarily take on the function of a board of directors.

Wary of all forms of hierarchical and centralized authority, the Christian Reformed Church, until a few years ago, had no more than an "interim" committee to administer church matters "between" synods. Even now, the denominational Board of Trustees is intended to be strictly subservient and fully accountable to the major assembly for the churches, namely, the annual synod.

Even with these restrictions in place, it is not surprising Synod 1995 will have to deal with two overtures regarding the Board. One overture asks that the name be changed to something other than "Board of Trustees." Although such modification may seem trivial — "a rose by any other name..." — an important point is at stake. The overture calls for the change as a constant reminder

Stumped by the 75/25 factor

The Report places the Canadian churches before an impossible choice: *For* greater control over agencies and *against* greater church involvement in communal ministry, *for* a Canadian Board of Trustees and *against* an assembly of churches in Canada, *for* a strange fish and *against* a natural pond. How did we get into this curious bind?

Over the past 30 years, the major impetus for a Canadian regional synod (the name for a full-fledged church assembly beyond classis) has come, naturally, from Canadian churches. But, again and again, and in numerous variations, reports to synod have declared, in the words of a 1993 version, that "there is little perceived need for regional synods in the Christian Reformed Church."

This observation is entirely accurate — and entirely beside the point. Entirely accurate, because the need is perceived by less than 25 per cent of the denomination. And entirely beside the point, because the need is perceived predominantly by Canadian churches and classes. This expressed need and desire is thwarted because 75 per cent of the synodical delegates deciding the issue represent the U.S. classes, which by and large perceive no need for regional synods.

It is this stalemate that gave birth to the Council as a malformed structure, a stopgap measure in face of the refusal to work towards a regional synod. Without any official standing in the denominational structures, the Council has a status lower than a classis, an entirely voluntary membership, and no say over vital aspects of the mission of the church, such as church planting. The Council is, as a 1993 report aptly puts it, *less than* a "truncated regional synod."

Assumption of little interest

So crippling was this handicap that in 1989 the Council unanimously adopted a

recommendation to seek a regional synod for Canada. But because of its lowly status, Council could not itself lay this request before Synod. Instead seven Canadian classes placed before Synod 1990 the request for a Canadian regional synod. Despite the support of seven out of 11 entirely Canadian Classes, plus a unanimous vote of all the Canadian classis representatives at Council, Synod 1993 declared that "the introduction of regional synods is not advisable at the present time." Instead, it made provisions for yet

assembly of the Canadian churches is lack of interest, if not opposition, in the United States. The lack of interest south of the border becomes the final word regarding an urgent and frequently expressed need north of the border. Thus, given the 75/25 factor at Synod, this lack of sensitivity towards a Canadian need crystallizes at once both the need for and the absence of a Canadian church assembly. The Synod has proven to be constitutionally incapable of taking this crucial Canadian concern fully

silence surrounding the Report. After all, if adopted by Synod, its recommendations will have far-reaching implications for mission and ministry in Canada. Yet, other than a few overtures to Synod '95, (including two excellent ones from Classis Eastern Canada), the Report looks for all the world like a sleeper. It is not difficult to point to possible reasons for this strange silence.

The spectre of division

Over the years, one recurring objection to a Canadian

less, the request for a regional synod is constantly saddled with the charge of "divisiveness." Wishing to avoid even the impression of sectionalism, many come to the conclusion that the issue of regional synods is best left alone.

The pressure for unanimity

The issue of divisiveness has an even more chilling effect. The pattern of resistance to regional synods south of the border, combined with the 75/25 factor at synod, places immense constraints on discussions this side of the border. The Canadian discussion suffocates under the pressure for unanimity. Any important differences on the issue of regional synods among Canadians had a disproportionate negative effect.

Picking up on dissenting voices, opponents to regional synods declare, "Look, even the Canadians don't agree." Or most damaging, "Listen, even a Canadian delegate to synod eloquently declares that the push for regional synods is conceived in nationalism and gives birth to division!" The burden of unanimity becomes a dead weight on "the Canadian voice."

Canadian unanimity, of course, should be neither expected nor required. Yet the pressure to close ranks is great. Since the Report was produced by a committee drawn from Canadian classes, criticizing it is clear evidence of "division in the ranks."

Some have concluded that the recommended structure is the only type of control over Canadian ministries we will ever get. Even in the absence of concerted opposition to these proposals, serious disagreement among Canadian leaders and Canadian synodical delegates regarding these proposals could well jeopardize the possibility of any progress in Canadian responsibility for Canadian ministry.

Such stagnation is all the more likely when some delegates and staff representatives will likely argue at synod that these recommenda-

Continued on page 19...



Delegates to the 1993 Council meeting in St. Catharines, Ont.

another lower-level assembly (to which we will return later) and once again appointed a committee, the present Committee on Structure for Ministry in Canada.

The Committee's assignment proceeds from the assumption that a regional synod is ruled out. Far more important than this assumption, however, is the Report's explanation for Synod's negative decision: "Because there is little interest in such a structure in the United States, Synod 1993 again declined" to adopt a regional synod model (pp.314-315).

That statement captures the entire "Canadian problem" in a nutshell. The reason why there cannot be a full-fledged as-

sembly.

Now the Canadian churches are faced with the prospect of disbanding its stopgap solution, the Council, and replacing it with a Board of Trustees and an Executive Director. Thus we would import a structure which — in the absence of a Canadian assembly — flouts every notion of Reformed church polity and undermines a fully church-directed Canadian ministry and mission.

Why this strange silence?

What is perhaps as disconcerting as the Structure for Ministry proposals is the relative

regional synod has been that this is divisive. The present Report too raises the spectre of division. Who would not shrink back before the very possibility of yet further divisiveness? This fear is sadly misplaced, however, when it is attached to the earnest desire of churches of one nation for a regional assembly. When the sincere concern that motivates this desire is to minister more effectively in and to this nation, why should a regional synod be divisive?

Already in 1959 a synodical report on regional synods hit this nail on the head: "sectionalism or unity is produced by the mind and attitude of people, not primarily by organizational lines." Neverthe-

Feature

Jesus looked down with approval, but Mom was upset

Cathy Smith

My dad, Tony Boer of Wyoming, Ont., has often told me stories about the war. He was 14 years old when Canadian soldiers liberated his home town of Ten Boer near the city of Groningen on April 17, 1945. My daughter Shannon is the same age today. So I decided to cast one story told by my dad in the form of a letter from him to his granddaughter.

Dear Shannon:

A wartime incident that still causes me to chuckle is the one that made my mother very angry with me for being a Good Samaritan. We had a Bible with some illustrations in it which I liked very much. In particular, one page showed scenes of people helping others — an old Dutch grandma, hands on solid hips and white cap on head, smiling at a young worker to whom she had given a glass of water; another woman, in black stockings, wooden shoes, and apron, offering a coat to a shivering boy with ragged pants and no shoes; a farmer, holding his lantern high, checking on a drifter allowed to sleep with a warm blanket in the barn on the straw. Superimposed above these sketches was a drawing of Jesus looking down with solemn approval: *Als de Heere Jezus weder komt...* ("If the Lord Jesus returns...")

It was because I wanted to serve the Lord in the same way that I got into trouble. This is what happened.

One evening I was on my way home. It was late, almost curfew, which was 8 p.m. No one was allowed to be on the street after that. A woman trudging along with a small suitcase, grey kerchief tied under her chin, beckoned me and asked me how much further it was to Appingedam. The town was at least 20 km away.

When I told her, she just drooped. It was obvious that she was exhausted and she would never be able to make it to Appingedam before curfew. She asked me if I knew where she could stay for the night. I had no idea. So I took her home

for her and she went on her way.

An unpleasant gift

Unfortunately, she left a reminder of her stay, a nasty reminder. Within a few days we had "schurft" (scabies). Imagine

as often as we do today. If the sheets and blankets were lying on the grass to dry, and the mattresses were being aired out on a wooden rack in the backyard the neighbors knew that you were having trouble with "schurft" or lice. That was so

stilled in me a conviction that serving the Lord means helping people.

You know that poor family of Mennonite immigrants from Mexico living in the grey house across the road from our farm? They have no car, no money,

ALS DE HEERE JEZUS WEDER KOMT ...



with me.

Now, you might think that was nice of me, and I thought so too! I was being a Good Samaritan! But there was no place at home for this stranger to sleep. In the end she was given my bed and I slept downstairs. Cooking oatmeal for breakfast was one of my morning chores. I made a bowl

an intensely itchy rash (which is quite contagious) spreading quickly over your whole body. The more you scratched, the worse it got. Some of the kids in my village had festering open sores because they were afflicted with such advanced cases. We had no salve or medication. The only treatment was to try to stay as clean as possible.

Now I understood my mom's reluctance to show the hospitality I expected of her! Because this pesky mite can survive in clothing, sheets, and even in mattresses, my mom had a lot of extra laundry to do. We had no washing machines, of course. Oh, my mom was annoyed with me! Back then we did not wash our bedding quite

embarrassing!

There was a funny ending to this good deed of mine, though. After the war, the woman came back to our village to visit us. She thanked all of us and gave my mom two beautiful, embroidered lace pillowcases.

Cups of cold water

As I look back now, I realize that much of my understanding of faith was based on those pictures in my Bible. After the war many villagers took in children from the big cities who suffered from hunger. We had more food in the country and there was a willingness to share and help one another. That's the key, I guess. I think that living through those hard times in-

and can't speak English. They communicate with one another in an old-fashioned German dialect. They can talk to us a little because we speak Dutch. Well last Friday Oma took the mom and the three little kids to the second-hand shop in Petrolia and bought them some winter coats. *Als de Heere Jezus weder komt...*

Well, I hope this has been helpful for your project. Tell your teacher to keep up the good work.

Love always,
Opa Boer

Cathy Smith is a teacher at John Knox Christian School in Wyoming, Ont. She and her husband, Mark, are the parents of three children.



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Feature

No utopia for Romania's Christians

Five years after the revolution, freedom brings new challenges for Protestants

Eddie Tait

The basement of the large building is packed with some 800 people, young, middle-aged and old. Dressed in their Sunday best, they sit on plastic chairs placed on a bare concrete floor. Wires dangle among the ceiling strip lights, and the fresh white paint on the walls and ceiling columns emphasize the structure's unfinished state.

Outside, a gaping hole reveals the unfinished main auditorium, which will soon seat some 1,500 people when the Maranatha Baptist Church in the Romanian city of Arad is finally completed.

There are many such building sites in Romania today, and a large number of the structures going up are Protestant churches. It is perhaps the most sig-

nificant sign of change since the revolution and overthrow of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu five years ago.

Under Ceausescu's despotic reign, the most dynamic, growing Protestant churches were targets of his Securitate (secret police). Leaders were arrested, theological seminaries were forced to stop functioning, and church buildings were closed down and eventually demolished. Yet driven underground, the church continued to grow. Today, all that has changed. The Protestant church is out in the open, determined for the most part to take full advantage of

New pressures

the freedoms it has now obtained. That is why Doreca Popa, pastor of Maranatha Baptist Church, is building such a large facility. Under Popa's plan, the new building is not just for Sunday worship.

But as Maranatha Baptist and other Protestant churches expand both facilities and visions for the new Romania, they acknowledge that in the wake of the revolution that toppled communism in 1989, a host of new challenges have come into play.

For example, each church confession is allowed by law to teach religion classes, but Romanian evangelicals say they have been pressured by the Orthodox Church, which would like to do all religious instruction.

The Orthodox Church has also been lobbying the government to pay the wages of priests and pastors "a measure emphatically opposed by many of Romania's Protestants. If such a proposal becomes law, Popa declares he "would refuse" the money. "If the government is paying you, then they could control you, which is what we have had in the years past," he says.

In fact, Popa believes it is the refusal to be compromised that has attracted so many new members to his Maranatha Church. At the time of the 1989 revolution, the church, which also runs two homes for orphaned children, had about 136 members. Today those figures have grown to 700 members and 200 children.

"I think that the reason for the growth of the church is that this group of people were sick of so much compromise in their former churches," reflects Popa. "They didn't want to stay where there was too much compromise with the communist government."

The most dangerous compromise

But, he adds, membership in other churches has declined because members have found Western-style materialism more attractive. The new type of compromise, one which Popa calls, "the most dangerous thing in Christian ministry in Romania today," is the pastors getting rich on Western aid.

"Now Christians are not working with the government against other Christians, but what has happened is that many people, including some leaders unfortunately, have accumulated a lot of things from people in the West," he asserts. "I don't want to blame anybody too much because we never had all these things, but what do I want most? To have a real impact in my ministry or to have a lot of riches, a new house, a brand new car or whatever I can get



The gateway to a Romanian Orthodox monastery.

from people in the West?"

Adds Popa: "It's such a pity that people who never compromised with the Ceausescu regime are compromising now in a different way."

Economic hardship

Another form of compromise confronting some Christians in Romania is bribery. Corruption is rife, and it is all too easy for believers to follow the trend in society by trying to beat the system, especially as heavy taxation is imposed on Western goods being brought into the country, even as aid.

But perhaps the biggest challenge facing the churches — and indeed the entire nation — is the severe economic crisis, which has hit all formerly-communist nations.

Nazarineanul (Nazarene Compassionate Ministries) is one Protestant organization working to make a positive contribution to the economic climate. A few months ago, the ministry acquired a 70-year-old, three-storey building near the centre of Bucharest which had survived Ceausescu's demolition of the capital's older buildings. Inside, the group runs small business management classes, as well as computer classes, Bible and theology courses, and English as a second language classes.

"Christians must make a real contribution to the economy of the nation," says Margaret Scott, Nazarineanul's program co-ordinator.

"As the church becomes stronger spiritually, it needs to

become stronger financially," she says, adding, "The idea of support to pastors is not a very well developed idea here. Most national pastors are really poorly paid if they're paid at all — they're expected to make their own way and support themselves."

Nazarineanul's interdenominational team of 45 Westerners and Romanians operates a weekly ministry in a geriatrics hospital, as well as being involved in two orphanages in the Romanian capital. In addition, the ministry has begun a sports program for street children. These children are not a major social problem at the moment, but Scott warns that Christian groups must be proactive with programs for these youth before they turn to crime and violence.

Many Protestants say the Romanian church can play an important role in the future of the nation. "What is important for Romania is that there should be more life in the church," according to Daniel dos Santos, who has ministered in different churches in the country since being sent out by Assemblies of God in Brazil. "Everybody's very sad here, and the people in the church are very sad as well. So we try to bring a message of hope and positiveness, a message of life to the church, because Jesus Christ is full of life."

Journalist Eddie Tait was recently on assignment in Romania for News Network International, a Christian news service which focuses on religious freedom issues in countries around the world.



A Romanian Orthodox priest

nificant outward sign of change since the revolution and overthrow of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu five years ago.

Under Ceausescu's despotic reign, the most dynamic, growing Protestant churches were targets of his Securitate (secret police). Leaders were arrested, theological seminaries were forced to stop functioning, and church buildings were closed down and eventually demolished. Yet driven underground, the church continued to grow. Today, all that has changed. The Protestant church is out in the open, determined for the most part to take full advantage of

cause they have the same humanist and evolutionist teaching as they did before the revolution. It's all there — the same teachers and training they got in the past from the communists."

In addition to its Christian kindergarten already in operation, Maranatha Baptist wants to start a Christian primary and secondary school this year. "But we're dependent on a new education law which hopefully will come," Popa says.

Another challenge confronting Protestants is the growing influence of the Orthodox Church, Popa acknowledges.

Advice

Ideas for how to cut down on sermon preparation time

Dear P & M:

Your column on the time spent on sermons (CC, April 7, 1995) was interesting. In fact, some seminars do teach that a preacher should spend one hour of preparation for every minute of delivery. That model, I suspect, is based on the academic lecture where, if the lecturer has not spent at least an hour in research to check all the references and quotations, he's probably flying too much by the seat of his pants. But a sermon is not a lecture, and the source material for a sermon should come from the people's own experience, not from research in texts.

At some workshops on writing and speaking, I suggested to a group of United Church preachers that if they spend more than half an hour in writing out their sermons, they are wasting their own time and their congregation's money. That's a radical claim, but it's based on two fairly widely accepted principles of communication: 1. People are far more interested in stories than in theory; and 2. The progress in any extended communication moves from where the listeners already are to where the speaker or writer wants them to be.

To apply that, one starts with what's already on the hearers' minds. From pastoral care, the preacher should have some idea what's bugging his/her parishioners. Is it a highway death? Is it an episode of teenage gang violence? Is it the local election - or an earthquake in Japan or a bombing in Oklahoma city? Whatever it is, the preacher has to start by finding something with which the people can immediately identify, something which reaches out and grabs them by their lapels and says, "Hey, pay attention. This matters to you!"

Then one defines the ending. What is the point the preacher wants to get across? I say "the point," not "the points," because I believe a sermon should have only one real point, and everything in the sermon should move the hearers towards that point.

Now you've got a beginning and an ending. You've got — to use a metaphor — the two hooks in the wall from which you can suspend a hammock, a line of communication. All you need is a series of short sentences or assertions that take you from beginning to ending. The illustrations accompanying these assertions can be told extemporaneously because you already know them.

So the actual writing time might consist of this:

We've all been shocked this week by the bombing in Oklahoma City. (Describe what we've seen on television.)

The frightening thing is that it seems to be our own people who did it. (Perhaps tell about old Pogo cartoon, with the line "We have seen the enemy and he is us.")

It's always much easier to blame outsiders for our faults. (Could talk about current affairs, or US/Iraq, or Hutu/Tutsi in Rwanda.)

It's always been that way. (Cite biblical examples, e.g. the Moabites, Amalekites, etc.)

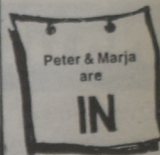
But in fact, the real danger has always come from within. (perhaps Mark 7:1-23.)

It still does. (Confession, perhaps, of a temptation encountered during the last week.)

We cannot clean up society without cleaning up ourselves (And so on.)

You can see how it goes. Obviously, this doesn't take into account the thinking time you referred to, as Peter goes about his pastoral duties, nor the immersion time, as he becomes aware of the meanings of the Scripture readings for the Sunday. But it does eliminate the painful writing and re-writing that can take so much time, even on a computer.

Jim Taylor, Editor,
Practice of Ministry in Canada



Dear Jim:

Thanks for your response. We take your comments as helpful advice for the actual writing process. You need to know, however, that the Reformed tradition of preaching favors the "expository" approach over the "topical" approach. So we Reformed preachers put a lot of time into understanding and then applying the text. We spend time researching the original language checking commentaries and locating the text in its cultural and biblical context precisely so that we don't fly too much by the seat of our pants.

We especially treasure historical-redemptive and Christ-centred preaching. We have to admit, however, that our attempts to preach solid sermons sometimes miss the mark in terms of touching people where they really live. Your letter reminds us that our sermons must be relevant and be able to answer the question: "So what?"

It probably is possible to sketch out the broad outline of a sermon in thirty minutes after all the groundwork is done. But that presumes two things: that the writer has the artistic gift to clearly sketch out the movement of his sermon and that the preacher is comfortable enough with his material and the art of preaching that he/she can preach from an extended outline. Perhaps those who are creatively free in the study and on the pulpit are in the minority. If that's the case, your letter may help someone who wants to be less bound to a manuscript.

Write to: Peter and Marja Slofstra, 16 Kimberridge Drive, St. Catharines, ON, L2N 5V6

Learning to distinguish handicaps and disabilities

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO, Ont. — Health care professionals need to learn the difference between disability and handicap in their work with children and adults who have long-term illness or disfigurement says Dr. Arlette Lefebvre, writing in the current issue of *calyx*, a publication of the department of bioethics at Toronto's Hospital for Sick

Children.

We contribute to "handicapism" when we convey an attitude of helplessness and hopelessness, rather than sensitivity to the unique beauty of the person, Lefebvre says. There should be a focus on the individual first and the illness second. The medical model, with its focus on a physical problem to be solved, is too nar-

row a viewpoint, she insists.

"For children born with disfigurement or disability, being the way they are is the only way they know," says Dr. Lefebvre. "Much damage can be done by submitting these children to endless medical tests and screening interviews" whose sole purpose is to define, quantify and highlight their "problem."

In fact, medical analysis is often not as good a predictor of the kind of life such a person will have as are their personality strengths and family and community supports, she says.

Health care workers need to be partners with their patient/client, listening and working with them, Lefebvre quotes Betty Bednar, who

speaks of her own experiences: "Being born with an uncommon facial anomaly, I have listened while strangers discussed me as if I weren't there. I have known nothing but the way I am. My disability has changed from treatment and aging, but it has always been me. I see myself through others as a cheek or a lop-sided face, as somehow lacking or flawed. To me this is whole. I have no sense of loss, and although I am clearly aware of my differences, I am comfortable with them."

Indeed, the individual is more important than the disability, says Lefebvre. She advocates a shift from a medical model which analyzes such long-term conditions to a developmental model which focuses on the individual's self-assessment of his or her identity and place in society.

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If you would like to be part of a dynamic staff, committed to serve Christ with your talents and you are qualified to teach art and other courses at the intermediate level, send your resume and covering letter to:</p> <p>Mr. Bruce Mitchell, Principal Chatham Chr. High School 90 Park Ave. E. Chatham, ON N7M 3V4</p> <p>LUCKNOW, Ont.: Lucknow Chr. School invites qualified applicants for a maternity leave position, Grades 3, 4, 5, starting in September 1995 to mid-March 1996. Applications accepted until May 30, 1995. Interested teachers direct inquiries to:</p> <p>Lawrence Uyl, Principal Lucknow & District Chr. School Box 550, Lucknow, ON N0G 2H0 Phone: (519) 528-2016</p> <p>WOODBIDGE, Ont.: Toronto Distr. Chr. High School has a position open in English. Apply to: Ren Siebenga, Principal c/o Toronto Distr. Chr. High School 377 Woodbridge Avenue Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8 Phone: (905) 851-1772 or (416) 741-2273 Fax: (905) 851-9992</p>	<p>WHY NOT? 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Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2</p> <p>MARCH 1995</p> <p>THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS</p> <p>van der BEEK, Anthony, born December 20, 1929 in The Hague, emigrated to Canada July 11, 1956, last known address: 12-3046 Coast Meridian Road, Port Quinlan, B.C.</p> <p>BIKKER, David, born October 6, 1929 in Arnhem, emigrated to Canada June 26, 1958.</p> <p>de BOER, Greta, born November 19, 1937 in Amsterdam, emigrated to Canada June 13, 1958.</p> <p>BONS, Gerardus Marinus, born May 24, 1929 in Nijmegen.</p> <p>BRAND, Johan, born October 20, 1930 in Rotterdam, last known address in Canada: 252 Kensington Avenue, Ingersoll, Ontario.</p> <p>RUSSEL, Antonius Gerhardus, born March 2, 1930 in Ennst, last known address in Canada: 619 Mainstreet, St. Catharines, Ontario.</p> <p>van BUNEN, Andries, born November 30, 1929 in Apeldoorn, emigrated to Canada June 13, 1956.</p> <p>van DELST, Maria, born December 1, 1930 in Nistelrode, last known address in Canada: 5311 Valiant Street N.W., Calgary, Alberta.</p> <p>DESALEGNE, Mulgetta, born June 5, 1956 in Ethiopia, emigrated to Canada in 1987.</p> <p>van DIJK, Gerrit, born June 2, 1931 in Rotterdam, emigrated to Canada April 21, 1957, last known address: Winnipeg.</p> <p>van DIJK, Nelly, born August 9, 1929 in The Hague.</p> <p>EETTING, Gerard, born November 15, 1930 in Emmen, Germany, emigrated to Canada May 18, 1957.</p>	<p>de ELZEN, Bartholomeus Theodorus, born August 2, 1930 in The Hague, last known address in Canada: 10 Sapping Court, Etobicoke, Ontario.</p> <p>GERRITSEN-VALLEE, Cornelia Maria, born March 24, 1923 in Rheden and</p> <p>GERRITSEN-VALLEE, Cornelia Maria, born January 20, 1942 in Velp, both emigrated to Canada in 1946.</p> <p>van GILS, Jacobus Baptist Martinus, born December 29, 1930 in Made, last known address in Canada: 5735 Bordeaux, Brossard, Quebec.</p> <p>GROEN, Martinus, born October 23, 1930 in Hoorn, emigrated to Canada May 20, 1957.</p> <p>HEIDSTRA, Karel, emigrated to Canada July 22, 1954, last known address: Tremont, Ontario.</p> <p>HOCHSTENBRACH, Antonius Richard Maria, born August 4, 1928 in The Hague.</p> <p>JOESE, Maaije Zwaartje, born January 18, 1931 in The Hague, emigrated to Canada August 4, 1975, last known address: R.R. 2, Courtenay, B.C.</p> <p>van der KLAAUW, Bartholomeus Johannes Cornelis, born January 6, 1929 in Wassenaar, last known address: 14 Majestic Court, Toronto, Ontario.</p> <p>KLEYENBURG, Charles, born August 13, 1928 in Rotterdam, emigrated to Canada September 27, 1955.</p> <p>MARBUS, Jacobs, born November 21, 1930 in Schiedam, emigrated to Canada June 17, 1966.</p> <p>MEINSTER, Hendrik Arle A., born July 31, 1930 in Willemstad, Curacao, emigrated to Canada June 10, 1959, last known address: 55 Swingstone Road, Westhill, Manitoba.</p> <p>van MILL, Hendrikus Gerardus, born August 13, 1930 in Dordrecht, emigrated to Canada March 29, 1955.</p> <p>MULDER, Willem G., born October 6, 1930 in Schiedam, emigrated to Canada March 4, 1960, last known address: Townline North, R.R.#2, Oshawa, Ontario.</p> <p>PIEELE, Reinier, born December 29, 1928 in Rotterdam, emigrated to Canada July 30, 1956, last known address: 2 Forsterstreet, Hamilton, Ontario.</p> <p>de RUITER, Nicolaas Maurits, born May 12, 1945 in The Hague and</p> <p>de RUITER, Louis Leonardus, born April 26, 1947 in The Hague.</p> <p>de RUITER, Paulina Theresia, born September 11, 1930 in The Hague, last known address in Canada: 215 Sunset Drive, Fredericton, New Brunswick.</p> <p>van der ZWAN, Teunis, born June 6, 1931 in Vlaardingen, emigrated to Canada March 25, 1960.</p> <p>CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS 1 DUNDAS STREET W., SUITE 2106 TORONTO, ONTARIO M5G 1Z3 TEL: (416) 598-2520</p>
<p>Church News</p> <p>Christian Reformed Church</p> <p>Address change: — Rev. Martin D. and Mrs. Alida Geleynse, 13-300 John Street S., Stratford, ON N5A 7V5, telephone unchanged: (519) 271-5793.</p>				

Classifieds

Summer Job Market	Vacations	Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities
<p>19-year-old Registered Practical Nurse looking for summer or longer-term employment. Have sales experience at farmers' market and working with children and the elderly. Willing to consider any type of work. Call Jennifer at (519) 453-3337.</p> <p>18-year-old female looking for full-time summer employment. Has experience in working with children, hoeing and picking cucumbers, but is willing to do much more. Tamara Bosma, R.R. 5, Hagersville, ON N0A 1H0, (905) 768-3546.</p>	<p>LITTLE EUROPE RESORT and TRAILER PARK</p> <p>Bracebridge, Muskoka</p> <p>Plan a successful vacation at our resort known for its Dutch hospitality. Reasonable rates for cottage rentals. Excellent for camping, swimming and fishing (ideal for group camping). "Little Europe" is located 10 km. east of Hwy. 11, on Hwy. 118 East, past the Muskoka Airport.</p> <p>• No pets please • Showers available Roel & Riet Bakema Little Europe Resort, R.R. 3, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1X1 Phone: (705) 645-2738</p>	<p>National Director - Camping</p> <p>Christian-based organization, with office in Burlington, Ont., is looking for a mature, qualified National Director, for its 9 camps across Canada.</p> <p>Requirements include: experience in Christian leadership (preferable Christian camping), management experience, skills in verbal and written communication, ability to motivate a diverse group towards the same goals, creative ideas for Christian camping, a fervent call to — and love for — children and youth ministry.</p> <p>The candidate should have a minimum of 2 years post-secondary education in the area of business or Christian leadership — with 5 years experience, or an equivalent of training and experience. Write us (with resume) and tell us why you feel you are capable of, and interested in, this position and expected salary.</p> <p>Write: ND — Search Committee c/o P.O. Box 85310, Burlington, ON L7R 4K5</p>	
<p>For Rent</p> <p>Smithville, Ont.: Starting this summer, 2 bedroom basement apartment, good for two adults; \$550 per month; stove, fridge, utilities included. No smoking, no pets. For more information call Mrs. M.A. Buist, (905) 957-2596</p>	<p>Lang's Resort Rice Lake</p> <p>Cottage & Camping Resort, geared for family holidays. Clean comfortable HK cottages, lakefront camping sites. Write or phone: Lang's Resort & Campground R.R. #3, Rosemeath, ON K0K 2X0 (905) 352-2308</p>		
<p>Vacations</p> <p> Elton Lodges</p> <p>Family resort, clean house-keeping cottages, very close to 9 miles of sandy beach, excellent golf courses, fishing and many other attractions.</p> <p>For information contact: Len & Rita Bette 459 Mosley St., Wasaga Beach, ON L0L 2P0 Phone: (705) 429-2420</p>	<p>Job Opportunities</p>	<p>Seeking a Pastor</p> <p>First Christian Reformed Church of Chilliwack, B.C., is seeking an ordained pastor to serve in a team ministry. One of our pastors plans to retire, D.V., in September while our Youth Pastor is completing his first year with us. First Christian Reformed Church of Chilliwack is a growing church of some 650 souls (150 families). A church profile is available. We are located 100 km east of Vancouver.</p> <p>Please write: Norman Brouwer, 46787 Portage Avenue, Chilliwack, BC V2P 7H3, Phone: (604) 792-4171.</p>	
<p>For Rent</p> <p>completely-furnished chalet in the Blue Mountain area. Livingroom, kitchen, two bedrooms, two 3-piece bathrooms. Beautiful view of the Beaver Valley and Georgian Bay. \$300 weekly/\$150 weekends.</p> <p>For more info, call Sake or Chelsey Dykstra at (519) 599-3789 or write to: Box 7, R.R. 2, Clarksburg, ON N0H 1J0</p>	<p>Stewardship Officer</p> <p>We seek a financial planning/gift planning advisor to the Christian community. Post-secondary degree and related experience preferred. Christian commitment, personal stewardly lifestyle, good inter-personal and public speaking skills are required. 3/4 time Sept.-May. Possibly full-time after.</p> <p>Executive Secretary</p> <p>This position requires superior organization and management skills as well as computer secretarial skills for dicta-typing. We are looking for a take-charge person. Half-time to evolve to full-time.</p> <p>For detailed position description or explanation, call or fax, in confidence, to: Christian Stewardship Services #210-455 Spadina Ave., Toronto, ON M5S 2G8 Call: 1-800-267-8890 or Fax: 1-416-977-4611</p>	<p>Why not consider Orillia, Ontario?</p> <p>The First Christian Reformed Church, Orillia, Ont., is seeking a pastor. Our present pastor will be retiring in October 1995. We are a thriving congregation of 80 families, 215 members located in a fabulous tourist region, surrounded by 3 lakes and 5 ski resorts. Our community offers Christian elementary education and many cultural experiences for all ages. If you are interested in hearing more about our congregation, please contact Henry Zwiars at 622 High St., Orillia, ON L3V 6Y8 or call (705) 326-4131 or (705) 325-1366.</p>	
		<p>Events</p> <p>ORGAN CONCERT by Jennifer VanderVege (Van Amerongen) May 20, 1995, at 8 p.m. Canadian Reformed Church, Beamsville, Ontario Freewill offering</p>	

Classifieds

Events	Events	Events	Events
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REDEEMER COLLEGE

CHOIR CONCERT

CHOIR BESORAH ("Good News") from the Netherlands will perform with soloists. This Dutch-language program will be televised on *Evangelische Omroep* in Europe.

Thursday, June 8, 1995 - 8:00 p.m.

Redeemer College Auditorium.

Tickets: \$5 (proceeds to Eastern Europe)

Tickets can be purchased at the door or from John VanderLaan at (905) 648-6585.



REDEEMER COLLEGE - 777 HIGHWAY 53 EAST, ANCASTER, ON, L9K 1J4

REDEEMER COLLEGE

BRASS CONCERT

The **ROYAL BRASS QUINTET** will be performing works from musical theatre, baroque pieces, & Sousa marches.

Monday, June 5, 1995 - 8:00 p.m.

Redeemer College Auditorium.

Tickets: \$10 (\$8 students/seniors)

Tickets can be purchased at the door or from Redeemer College at (905) 648-2131.



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Development Director

Calgary Christian School, providing Christ-centred education and operated by a parent-run society, is seeking to fill a position of **Development Director**.

The ideal candidate will have a minimum of 2 years experience in development or similar background. The knowledge of goals and objectives with respect to Christian education is vital. The successful candidate will be responsible for the fund raising initiatives and functions of the society and influence the public relations efforts and long range goals. Superior communication and interpersonal skills therefore are essential. Please submit a resume in confidence to:

Development Director Posting

c/o Treasurer, 2839 49 Street SW, Calgary, AB T3E 3X9

Deadline for applicants is June 10, 1995.

Christian Courier 50th anniversary

C.C. has existed for 50 years and has launched its anniversary to celebrate five decades of Reformed, Christian journalism in Canada. This campaign will also boost our profile and intends to gain much-needed new subscriptions!

The paper's friends and suppliers have already agreed to help offset the expenses of printing and distributing a commemorative poster, church bulletin covers, and a special anniversary issue. We're asking you to help us celebrate 50 years of Christian journalism as well!

Clip and mail to Christian Courier,
4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

☐ Yes! I want to be part of Christian Courier's 50th anniversary and celebrate Reformed, Christian journalism in Canada.

☐ Yes! I want to receive a free copy of the commemorative poster (donations over \$25 only).

Please find enclosed my cheque for:

☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$ my donation

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
Phone: _____ Prov.: _____ Code: _____

We cannot yet offer charitable donation receipts. Businesses can receive free advertisement space in the anniversary issue for donations exceeding \$50. Please ask to receive our business sponsorship package. We gladly accept in-kind donations.

From the Netherlands
Choir 'Besorah' ("Good News")
Wim Klein Haneveld, Conductor

"Liberation" Concert Tour

(under the auspices of "Evangelische Omroep,"
Hilversum, the Netherlands)

Featuring:

Corrie Koops (soprano); Martin Zonneveld and Kees Bruggeman (organ & piano), and from Hungary: Eszter Alföldy-Boruss (flute) and Csaba Nagy (oboe).

Itinerary:

June 7: 7:30 p.m., Holland Chr. Homes, Brampton, Ont.
with Rev. G. de Fijter (Vriezenveen)
June 8: 8 p.m., Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.
with Rev. Henry R. de Bolster (Tickets \$5.00)
June 11: 5 p.m., (Dutch service), Melrose United Church,
68 Homewood Ave., Hamilton, with Rev. G. de Fijter
June 15: 8 p.m., Trinity CRC, Abbotsford (Clearbrook), B.C.
June 17: 7:30 p.m., Third CRC, Lynden, Wash.
June 18: 8 p.m., Can. Ref. Church, Langley, B.C.
(meditations by Drs. L.W. Bikkes, Abbotsford)

The audience is invited to join the choir in song.
Free will offering for "Zingend Geloven," and/or the choir's
tour to Hungary and Romania in 1996.

Fifth Annual Four-Day Evening Walk promises fun and exercise



Hamilton/Burlington, Ontario

The Royal Botanical Gardens, 680 Plains Rd. W., Burlington, Ont., will once more be the setting of (to-date) Canada's only **Four-Day Evening Walk**. The walk, rooted in similar but longer-running events in Europe is quickly becoming accepted here as "The Dutch Walk." It has provided fun, entertainment, socializing and good, healthy exercise in the past four years and promises more of the same for 1995.

This year's event will run from **June 12 to June 15**. Registration will start at 5:30 p.m. on June 12 at RBG Centre. Cost will be \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors (60+) and students. \$1 for children (5-12). Membership at RBG reduces the cost for adults, seniors and students by \$1. A further \$1 reduction in these categories may be realized by pre-registering (using the form below). Participants walk a five, ten or fifteen km circuit. Routes are blazed and checkpoints provided. A total of 20 km with a minimum of three days participation qualifies the participant for an official medal of the **Four-Day Evening Walk**. Entertainment will again be provided by Nick de Rooy on opening night (that'll be five years straight!) and by the Burlington Teen Tour Band at the closing. The committee has also made arrangements for some entertainment for days 2 and 3 at the Arboretum.

This year's theme is **"50 years Holland-Canada."** The veterans have been invited and their presence will add a lot of lustre to the event. For further information write to Box 79554, Hamilton, ON L8T 5A2 or phone (905) 383-6319.

--- PRE-REGISTRATION FORM FOUR-DAY EVENING WALK ---

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/Prov.: _____
Postal code: _____ Phone: _____
of adults _____ Children _____ Seniors _____
of students _____ # of RBG members _____

To register send a cheque payable to:
4-Day Evening Walk Committee,
P.O. Box 79554, Hamilton, ON L8T 5A2
As soon as payment is received your name will be registered. Please go to the pre-registration desk on June 12.

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week of
learning,
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relaxation.

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July 17-21, 1995

FOR WHOM?

All friends of Calvin—singles,
couples, families, young and old.

THEME?

Stories: Show and Tell

SEMINARS?

"Storying Ourselves" D. John Lee,
psychology
"A Theological Sampler" Debra L.
Freeberg, communications

MEALS AND HOUSING?

All provided by the college.

OTHER PROGRAMS?

For children: "Camp Summerfest,"
teen activities and child care; Plus
Camps in Art, Chemistry, Foreign
Language and athletics (require an
additional fee)

FREE TIME?

All afternoons. Enjoy Calvin's
facilities: the attractions of Grand
Rapids and western Michigan. An
exciting social activity is planned
each evening.

COST?

\$220 adults; \$120 children ten and
over; \$60 children nine and under.
Add 35% to final cost if paying in
Canadian funds.

NOT STAYING ON CAMPUS?

\$120 fee includes all but room and
board; \$60 for child care or "Camp
Summerfest."

CALVIN ALUMNI?

Class Reunions will be held on
July 19, 20, 21, and 22. Call
(616)957-8700 for Reunion
information

SUMMERFEST

Alumni and Public Relations
Office
Calvin College 3201 Burton SE,
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616)957-6142

CALVIN
College

Calendar of Events

- May 20** Ottawa's Dutch community will break ground for a \$3 million windmill which will stand as a permanent memorial to Canada's role in liberating the Netherlands. The "Canadian Tulip Festival" will be from May 17-22. Info: (613) 224-7756.
- May 20** "W.W.II Veterans Appreciation Day," **Picture Butte, Alta.** Info: (403) 732-4380.
- May 20** Organ concert by Jennifer VanderVegte-Van Amerongen, 8 p.m., Can. Ref. Church, **Beamsville, Ont.** Free will offering.
- May 20** Dedication of fountain in remembrance of the 1945 liberation donated by the Dutch community of **Goderich, Ont.**, and surrounding area. Parade leaving at 1:30 p.m. from Legion to the Cenotaph, with fountain dedication following. Music by various bands. Info: (519) 524-7280.
- May 26** Concert by the "Koninklijke Nederlandse Militaire Kapel," 8 p.m., Ahlumi Hall, U. of W. Ont., **London, Ont.** Info: (519) 661-0453.
- May 27** "Annual ABC Sale," 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at Shalom Manor, **Grimshy, Ont.** Breakfast from 8-10 a.m., lunch from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Plants, flowers, crafts, toys, bake table and much more. Everyone welcome!
- May 27** "Dutch Day" is **Dundas, Ont.**, with special food and entertainment. Concert at 7:30 p.m. in the Dundas Arena by the "Koninklijke Nederlandse Militaire Kapel." Info: (905) 383-9477.
- May 31** "Hollands Dag" (25th) at CRC, **York, Ont.** Commemoration of the liberation of the Netherlands. Speaker: Mr. P.W.A. Schellekens, Consul-General of the Netherlands. Info: (905) 772-3695.
- June 4** Dutch worship service led by Rev. Riemer Praamsma, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster, Ont.**
- June 5** The "Royal Brass Quintet" in concert, 8 p.m., Redeemer College auditorium, **Ancaster, Ont.** Info/tickets (905) 648-2131.
- June 5-9** "Milk & Honey Summer Festival," a week-long festival of fun, fellowship and learning, at Redeemer College, **Ancaster, Ont.** Info & registration: Janet Katerberg (905) 648-2131, ext. 225.
- June 8** Concert by the "Chor Besorah," sponsored by the "Evangelische Omroep," Hilversum, the Neth. At 8 p.m., Redeemer College auditorium, **Ancaster, Ont.** Info/tickets John VanderLaan (905) 648-6585, or at the door.
- June 9-10** 25th Anniversary celebrations of the Chatham Chr. High School, **Chatham, Ont.** Info: Wendy Horneman, phone/fax (519) 352-9298.
- June 11** Dutch service with the "Besorah Mixed Choir," 5 p.m., Melrose United Church (Locke & Homewood), **Hamilton, Ont.** Message by Rev. G. de Fijter (Vriezenvee, the Neth.). Service will be taped for E.O., Hilversum, the Neth. Info: John VanderLaan (905) 648-6585/3170.
- June 11** "50th Anniversary Memorial Ecumenical Service" to remember the liberation of the Netherlands. At 6:30 p.m., Essex United Church, 53 Talbot, **Essex, Ont.** Special recognition will be given to the Essex Scottish Regiment in the form of a mural created by local artists Layne Van Loo and Johana Johnson. Info: (519) 776-4456/7757.
- June 12-15** "Four-Day Evening Walk" or "Avond Vierdaagse" at the Royal Botanical Gardens, 680 Plains Rd. W., **Burlington, Ont.** Choice of 5, 10 or 15 km walks. Medals issued upon completion of 20 km in total or more. Music, entertainment, etc. Info: (905) 383-6319 or write P.O. Box 79554, Hamilton, ON L8T 5A2.
- June 14** "Hollands Dag" (the 26th), 10 a.m., Community Centre, **Moorefield, Ont.** Speaker: Rev. Martin D. Geleynse (Stratford). Bring your own lunch!
- June 17** The "23rd annual Granneger Picnic," 10 a.m., Grand River Conservation Area, **Rockwood, Ont.** Info: (519) 235-0719.
- June 21** CCBF's 9th annual "All-Ontario Golf Tournament & BBQ," Golf at Knollwood Golf (old course) and BBQ at Redeemer College, **Ancaster, Ont.** Info: (905) 522-8602 or 648-3503.
- June 21-24** An ICS/Dooyeweerd Centre/Redeemer-sponsored conference on "Antiquity and the Reformed Tradition," at Knox College, **Toronto, Ont.** Speakers: Dr. E.P. Meijering, Dr. Calvin Seerveld and Dr. Abraham Bos. Info: ICS at (416) 979-2331, fax (416) 979-2332.
- July 1-2** 40th anniversary of CRC, **Charlottetown, PEI.** Info: Audrey Masselink, fax (902) 892-5525.
- July 10-28** "Summer School" at Wycliffe College and ICS, **Toronto, Ont.** For a brochure and registration details, call Ian Ritchie at (416) 979-2870 or fax (416) 979-0471.
- July 12** "Hollands Dag," 10 a.m., Caradoc Community Centre, **Mount Brydges, Ont.** Speaker: Rev. John D. Hellinga. Bring your own lunch and cup!
- July 23** Dutch worship service, led by Rev. John G. Klomps, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster, Ont.**
- Aug. 4-7** "ICS Ontario Family Conference," featuring Elaine Storkey (Christian Impact, London, England) and others, at HDCHS, **Ancaster, Ont.** Info: (416) 979-2331.

Will synod approve a fish without a pond?

...continued from page 11

tions grant too much Canadian control, thus weakening the increasingly centralized agency direction. Why risk losing the measure of Canadian administrative control which the Report offers, in the hope of assembly ownership of mission in Canada. That hope is vain. So the argument goes. And so the silence continues.

These pressures towards silence betray, of course, a sense of resignation. Many have concluded, "The struggle for regional synods is futile." Such resignation is deeply disheartening. Yet it is entirely understandable. Years of discussion, numerous study committees, and especially the concerted clamor of a majority of Canadian classes and of an entire Council — after all this has been met repeatedly with a synodical no, why bother?

A mission/fantasy experiment

Suppose for a moment that Canada were a mission field, and the Christian Reformed congregations here were the fruit of the missionary work of a U.S.-based Christian Reformed denomination. Further, it would help this fantasy to select a distinct skin color for these northern people. Now picture these mission churches placing before the assembly of the mother church the urgent need for their own assembly, not in order to separate from the mother church, but in order to take full responsibility for the distinct shape of their mission and ministry in and to this nation. Can there be any doubt about the reaction of the mother church? Surely, this request would be greeted with rejoicing — jubilation in Jerusalem, indeed, from Dan to Beer Sheeba. The mother church would applaud this development as a wonderful sign of maturity, indeed as a work of the Spirit.

It would be unimaginable that the mother church would respond as follows, "We see no need for such an assembly. There is no evidence that this

would make your ministry more effective. Despite your assurances and good intentions, this move would be divisive. Besides, granting this requires readjustment in the central administration of the mother church, including a small, yet painful, reduction in our Grand Rapids staff, and a restriction of the mandate of the denominational Executive Director. It is unreasonable to expect such sacrifices. We reluctantly conclude, therefore, that the introduction of a northern regional assembly is not advisable at the present time."

Against all such resistance, a chorus of voices would resound in the mother church itself — a wail from Dan to Beer Sheeba, indeed in much of Jerusalem itself. A clarion cry would sharply repudiate such sentiments as an intolerable form of paternalism, an unfortunate hold-over of a bygone era.

But Canada is not a mission field.

A gutted assembly?

Besides, if the present Council is inadequate, some other substitute will have to do. This raises the matter to which I promised to return. The Committee was mandated to propose a structure for ministry in Canada "in light of" a recent provision for a new assembly. Approved by Synod 1993 and ratified the following year, provision 44 (the number of the relevant Church Order article) allows neighboring classes to organize themselves into an "ecclesiastical assembly." It would function on the level of

classes to deal with matters of mutual concern.

Provision 44 may prove to be useful in addressing particular issues that affect two or three classes, whether in the U.S. or Canada. For Canada as a whole, however, such an assembly can serve no useful purpose. The Report's recommendations gut the very structure in the light of which the Report was written. After all, every vital mission that is presently the responsibility of the Council is to be placed under the "governance" of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director. This central structure would supervise all nation-wide mission endeavors, media ministries, and witness to the government. What meaningful mandate could there possibly be for a "classis of classes" next to an effectively functioning Board and efficiently managing Executive Director? What church or classis would invest any energy or money into this sub-classis?

Perhaps its sole usefulness lies in the one advantage this conglomeration of classes has over the present Council, namely, direct access to synod. An assembly of Canadian classes could be convoked, therefore, to lay before synod one final time the plea for a regional synod for the Christian Reformed churches in Canada.

George VanderVelde is Senior Member of systematic theology at the Institute for Christian Studies, is a member of both the denomination's and the Council's Interchurch Relations Committee and is a member of the Christian Reformed Church in Willowdale, Ont.



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News

Springboard: positive opportunity for young offenders

Russell Cousins

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Since 1974 Springboard has been operating in Toronto and Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., and since 1990, in St. Catharines, Ont., as a temporary residence for youths who have come into conflict with the law. There are 11 residences in all. The standard 10-bed facilities are designed to house male young offenders aged 16 to 19 in an open custody setting. The offenders are offered meals, shelter and various activities and programs. Senior counsellor Ken Dobbin explains the agency's mandate.

Recognize potential

"What we offer to these people is a safe environment and services to help clients recognize their problems while at the same time recognizing their potential."

Through community-based support groups and counselling services, many of these young people have the opportunity to leave the corrections system with more options and greater insights on how to cope with family, employment and personal obstacles than they might

have had before they entered.

Dobbin sees a pattern of development in many of the residents. "What happens to a lot of the clients is that they no longer have those other peers



Ken Dobbin

and the problem of having something to do with their time. Once they get dropped in here they no longer have access to many things they would normally."

The offender, or "client," as the agency prefers, comes to Springboard via the courts. Initially he may have been sen-

tenced to secure custody (prison) for a period of time, then released to open custody for the remainder of his sentence. He may also be sentenced directly to open custody at the time of his hearing. Both paths are determined by the level and/or frequency of the offence(s) committed. The more violent and severe offenses (about one per cent) are generally dealt with through the secure system.

The boys that come to these residences come with diverse backgrounds. They are individuals with as wide a range of personalities as one could imagine. Some are withdrawn, introverted, isolated by a fear of the "big, bad, cruel world." Yet others are more extroverted, outgoing, loud and abrasive, exuding a seemingly fearless personality.

"Even though many of them try to deny or hide it, they all have a couple of things in common," says Dobbin — "no sense of responsibility for, and a lack of motivation toward future planning. In other words, 'Live for today.'"

The counsellor goes on to explain that many of these young

people are initially guilty of succumbing to peer pressure and, coupled with either severe family dysfunctions or overly introverted/extroverted personalities, find themselves in a confrontation with the legal system.

Drugs, sexual awareness, and a desire for material gain help to fuel the young person into illegal activity in the false hope of finding a place among their peers in the community.

Shifting focus

Springboard understands that these offenders require a shift in their focus. Counsellors using agency programs such as literacy or community-based support groups such as Futures, examine and observe, then try to re-direct the clients' energies into assertive, positive and productive attitudes.

"Basically, they're good kids," says Dobbin.

Because youth counsellors are considered authority figures, they walk a fine line between a helping relationship aimed at changing behavioral attitudes and attaining realistic goals, and as agency employees and under contract to the Ministry of Corrections, being comfortable and

confident in administering consequences to residents for infractions incurred while in custody. The latter at times includes moving clients back into secure custody if necessary.

"We all know that they have a job to do," says one resident, "and most of 'em treat you pretty good as long as you don't make a lot of trouble."

Most of the clients begin their involvement with a counsellor with reluctance and resistance. Some have an adverse reaction to authority of any kind, no matter what the circumstance. Others become dependent on the worker to the point of being unable to make decisions concerning their future without the assistance of the worker. During a client's stay (on average, about five months), the youth workers must quickly learn to distinguish these factors and be able to modify their approach in order to serve the client effectively.

"It's always a challenge to understand these kids, while at the same time helping them to understand themselves and the world around them," explains Dobbin.

A seemingly random act took a vital Christian's life

Nellie Westerhoff
(with information from staff
and supporters of Pacific
Christian School)

VICTORIA, B.C. — The supporting community of Pacific Christian School in Victoria was saddened recently when it experienced the loss of what friends called "a remarkable woman." Sheila Damude, 49, business manager of the school, had flown to Bangkok, Thailand, to join her youngest son, Darin, 22, who had been travelling for two months in India and Asia with friends. Damude and her son were to spend a spring break vacation together.

It is known that they left the Thai capital on March 16, having purchased airline tickets for a flight to the resort island of Phuket, off Thailand's west coast. It was on this island, which hosts thousands of tourists yearly, and is not in the least considered dangerous, that the Damudes were murdered, their dismembered bodies

dumped into an abandoned mine.

Dental records sent to Thailand confirmed the identity of the bodies. The brutality of the event has pierced the hearts of the people in the work and faith communities in which Damude took so vital a part.

Considered a suspect in the double slaying is a British man, John Martin Scripps, a convicted heroin smuggler. He is known to have stayed in the same hotel as the Damudes. At the time of his arrest on March 19 in Singapore, he was carrying Sheila's and Darin's passports and credit cards.

Further information in the hands of authorities of the different countries involved suggests Scripps may have been involved in similar crimes with victims from South Africa, the United States and Mexico.

Exuberant community participant

Sheila Damude had been involved with Pacific Christian

since 1985, her exuberance and driving energy much admired by all who knew her. Over the years many successful school



Sheila Damude

functions and events benefited from her imaginative and zesty approach to details she had committed herself to look after, says a school spokesperson. Yet she refused acclaim and praise, generously desiring that others take credit for the success.

Many others testified that her love for the Lord was mirrored in the way she related to the people around her in their needs and sorrows.

Political savvy

Damude had honed her communication skills in provincial and local political activities before joining the staff at Pacific Christian School. She had contributed significantly to the success of provincial, mayoral and aldermanic candidates. As a result she was able to "network" confidently and knowledgeably with people of influence in the political hierarchy. Unstintingly she made her talents available for the benefit of the school.

One incident illustrates her determination. Due to the widening of the road that passes in front of Pacific Christian, concern for the safety of the children dictated that a new fence be installed. When city officials announced that a chain link fence would offer sufficient

protection, Damude fought stubbornly to upgrade that to a sound barrier. She won.

On April 6, 1995, over 1,200 people gathered at a Victoria church at a service in memory of Sheila and Darin Damude. Family, friends, co-workers, students, politicians and community leaders came to share their grief publicly, but they also affirmed the value of the lives of those so violently taken from their midst. They read Scriptures, sang hymns, prayed and were able to laugh at some shared memories.

The Damudes' memory, a Memorial Legacy Fund was established at Pacific Christian. Many of those who mourned, although stunned by this example of apparently random violence, took comfort from their communal belief that nothing happens by chance to those who put their trust in God.